



Bentley's Country Club Auto Repair of Lake Charles promotes pollution prevention

Practically every business operating in Louisiana will generate some form of waste or potentially environmentally hazardous substance that will need to be disposed of in a proper, environmentally sound manner. Auto repair shops are particularly active in their dealing with environmentally sensitive substances such as used batteries, oil cans, chemical waste and used motor oil that must undergo proper disposal. Bentley's Country Club Auto Repair and Collision, Inc., of Lake Charles has lead the way in setting the example of how a business should not only adhere to those environmentally sound practices, but also establish a program that ensures compliance.

Last April, Bentley's was awarded a Small Business Achievement Award in Pollution Prevention through the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's Environmental Leadership Program. The award was in recognition of Bentley's pollution prevention program which focused on reducing the emissions released and waste generated by the shop. The project was initiated in 2009 with a challenge to change the way the shop was operated, thereby making it more environmentally friendly. New water-based paint booths were installed that eliminated approximately 90 percent of VOC emissions when compared to the old solvent-based paint booths. A recycling program was established that included numerous items such as scrap metal, used oil and oil filters, antifreeze, paint waste, absorbent pads, oily rags, old batteries, tires and ink cartridges. The shop is currently in the process of connecting to the city sewer system to prevent storm water runoff. These changes were implemented throughout the shop to improve the quality of work and the community as well.

"As a business owner, I take pride in abiding by environmental regulations and doing my part to cut down on pollution and waste any way that I can," said Bentley Berlin, owner of Bentley's Country Club Auto Repair & Collision. "Recycling of chemicals, oil, containers and environmentally hazardous materials is an important facet of our business practice."

Collectively, the efforts of ELP members in 2009-2010 removed 3,499,548 pounds of pollutants from the environment, including NOx emissions, acrylamide, nitrates, solid waste, used oil, etc. Additionally, 172,034 kWh in energy usage were reduced through the UNPLUG Campaign. Also, 1,199,144 pounds of materials were recycled, including electronic waste and household hazardous materials. Through an environmental ordinance, a Litter Court was established to increase accountability, establish uniform penalties and streamline enforcement. A complete list of projects and honorees can be viewed on the DEQ Web site, www.deq.louisiana.gov/elp.

"The Environmental Leadership Program is a great way to recognize those who have worked tirelessly to spearhead community outreach efforts, combat pollution or present educational programs that make a positive difference in the quality of Louisiana's environment," said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. "With the addition of 18 new members, we hope to spread the word and enlist others to join us in continuing along the path of preserving and protecting our state's natural resources for future generations."

For more information on the ELP, please contact Linda Brown at 225-219-3954.